

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2938

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1969

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJ: RUMORS OF GREEK-TURKISH MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN
NORTHERN AEGEAN

USCINCEUR AND USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLADS

1. COINCIDENT WITH PROMISING FORECASTS OF EXTENSIVE AEGEAN OIL RESOURCES RESULTING FROM RECENT TEST-DRILLING, EMBASSY HAS HEARD NUMBER OF REPORTS CONCERNING GREEK MILITARY MOVEMENTS IN AREA. FOREIGN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES HAVE COME TO EMBASSY OFFICERS SEEKING CONFIRMATION OF STORIES RANGING FROM RUMORED OMINOUS CONCENTRATION OF GREEK NAVAL VESSELS AROUND THASSOS TO BUILD-UP OF GREEK LAND FORCES IN THRACE AND TO ORDERS TO GREEK AIR FORCE TO INTERCEPT ANY TURKISH PLANES THAT OVERFLY WHAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AS INTERNATIONAL WATERS IN AEGEAN, EVEN IF TURKISH MOVEMENTS PART OF ONGOING LOW LEVEL NATO EXERCISES.

2. SO FAR AS EMBASSY ABLE TO DETERMINE THESE STORIES

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CAN BE SAFELY DISMISSED AT THIS JUNCTURE AS RUMORS OR

EXAGGERATION OF TROOP MOVEMENTS THOUGH THEY PRESUMABLY REFLECT DELIBERATE GREEK EFFORT TO REINFORCE GOG CLAIM OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO AEGEAN OIL RESOURCES AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING. RUMORS MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN BUILT UP BY REGIME IN EFFORT TO MEET POSSIBILITY THAT OPPOSITION WILL DEVELOP WITHIN GREEK MILITARY TO WAY IN WHICH REGIME IS RUNNING GREEK POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON NEED TO LIFT POTENTIAL THREAT FROM TURKEY TO GREEK OIL EXPLOITATION.

3. EMBASSY HAS ALSO CONSIDERED WHETHER APPARENT GREEK INTEREST IN PERMITTING SUCH RUMORS TO DEVELOP MAY HAVE SOME RELATION TO PRESENT SITUATION IN CYPRUS. FOR TIME BEING, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS DOUBTFUL THAT GOG WOULD EXPECT THREATENING POSTURE AGAINST GOT IN NORTHERN AEGEAN TO HAVE CONSTRUCTIVE EFFECT ON ISLAND, WHETHER IN RESPECT TO TURKISH ATTITUDES OR MAKARIOS.

4. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR RUMORS. FOR TIME BEING, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IS PRIMARY CONSIDERATION, ALONG WITH CONTINGENCY PLANNING, AND THAT GOG HAS NOT DECIDED TO EMBARK ON COURSE OF CONFRONTATION SO EVIDENTLY FRAUGHT WITH RISKS. WE ALSO WOULD NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH REPORTS BEING PROMOTED BY OPPOSITION FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES.
BRANDIN

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